R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 018 299 RC 002 389

EDUCATION OF AMERICAN INDIAN CHILDREN.

BY- GAARDER, BRUCE

PUB DATE 10 NOV 67

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.44 9P.

DESCRIPTORS- *AMERICAN INDIANS, *ACCULTURATION, BILINGUALISM, *CHILDREN, CULTURE, EDUCATION, EDUCATIONAL POLICY, ENGLISH (SECOND LANGUAGE), LANGUAGE, LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT, PARENT SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP, RESEARCH, SELF ACTUALIZATION, SELF ESTEEM,

EDUCATIONAL POLICY FOR AMERICAN INDIAN CHILDREN HAS BEEN BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES THAT THE INDIAN'S SALVATION LIES IN HIS CEASING TO BE WHAT AND WHO HE IS, THAT IT LIES IN BECOMING ASSIMILATED THROUGH ALIENATION, AND THAT ENGLISH SHALL BE THE SOLE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION. AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THESE PRINCIPLES AND THE INDIAN CHILDREN'S POOR SELF-CONCEPT, THEY ACHIEVE AT A LESSER RATE THAN THEIR ANGLO COUNTERPARTS. THE VIEW PRESENTED IN THIS REPORT IS THAT SELF-SUFFICIENCY, REALIZED THROUGH SELF-FULFILLMENT FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL INDIAN CHILD AND FOR EACH SEPARATE INDIAN TRIBE, WILL BE THE QUICKEST WAY TO SELF-DISPERSAL OF THE TRIBES AND THEIR EVENTUAL ASSIMILATION AND DISAPPEARANCE. RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH WILL HELP TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY INCLUDE--(1) INDIANS SHOULD HAVE LOCAL CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN SCHOOLS, (2) INDIANS EMPLOYED WITH FEDERAL FUNDS FOR WORK WITH OTHER INDIANS SHOULD BE FROM THE SAME TRIBE, (3) INDIAN SCHOOLS SHOULD IMPLEMENT BILINGUAL INSTRUCTION, (4) A STRONG, MUTUALLY-REINFORCING RELATIONSHIP SHOULD BE DEVELOPED BETWEEN INDIAN PUPILS' PARENTS AND THE SCHOOL, AND (5) THERE SHOULD BE FURTHER GRADUATE STUDY AND A RESEARCH CENTER FOCUSED ON THE HISTORY, LANGUAGES, AND CULTURE OF AMERICAN INDIANS. THIS REPORT WAS PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE SOUTHWEST COUNCIL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS, EL PASO, TEXAS, NOVEMBER 10-11, 1967. (ES)

ED018299

Education of American Indian Children

B. GAARDER

U. S. Office of Education

A statement of recommendations on the organization, content, teachers, and teaching methods of a system of schools would be meaningless without a clear understanding of the nature of the children to be educated and of the society which produces and includes them, or without general agreement as to the philosophy underlying their education. In the case of American Indian children neither the clear understanding nor the general agreement can safely be assumed, and both must therefore be made explicit. However briefly, we must first attempt to say who and what these children are and what are the results we would hope to attain with them.

SECTION ONE: *The philosophical basis of educational policy in the U.S.*

Brief references to two documents, 184 years apart in our history, suffice on this point. The earlier document, the Bill of Rights of the Constitution, is unequivocally emphatic about the primacy and dignity of the individual as opposed to the power of the state. Justice Brandeis has epitomized this emphasis in the Olmstead Case: "The makers of the Constitution . . . sought to protect Americans in their beliefs, their thoughts, their emotions and their sensations. They conferred, as against the Government, *the right to be let alone,* the most comprehensive of rights and the right most valued by civilized men."

The second document, published in 1960 as *Goals for Americans,* contains the Report of President Eisenhower's Commission on National Goals together with certain essays on the same subject. Henry Wriston, chairman of the Commission, reminds us that human dignity is the basic value of freedom, that dignity "does not consist in being well-housed, well-clothed and well-fed." And he goes on to say that "it rests exclusively upon the lively faith that individuals are beings of infinite value." (Wriston, 1960)

An essay in the same volume (p. 81) by John W. Gardner (now Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare) entitled "National Goals in Education," reaffirms for our day the ideal of the Constitution as it regards education: "Our deepest convictions impel us to foster individual fulfillment. We wish each one to achieve the promise that is in him . . . Our devotion to equality . . . asserts that each should be enabled to develop to the full, in his own style and to his own limit."

Some educational corollaries emerge from the above statement and restatements of principles:

1) If the first goal of education is individual self-fulfillment, all other goals, however important, such as preparation for citizenship, preparation for the "the world of work," and assimilation to the "mainstream of American life," become secondary.
2) Our equality before the law and the "self-evident truth" that all men are created equal *do not impose upon any one of us the obligation to be equal,* that is to say, to be the same as everyone else.

RC 002389

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

3) There are many perfectly legitimate ways of being human.
4) The child's parents and the child himself must have the major voice in determining what his education should be.

So we see the "right to be let alone" places self-fulfillment, self-determined, at the peak of all the desiderata of education.

In contrast to the above, quotations from authoritative sources abound showing that the philosophy which has guided those entrusted with the education of American Indian children has rested squarely on other principles: "protection of the child from the detrimental influence of the home surroundings," "the destruction of tribal ways," "the creation of a new, autonomous, total environment into which the Indian child can be transmigrated so as to remake him into a European personality," "destruction of the appalling religious beliefs and superstitions of the Indians," "eradication of Indian culture as the primary source of Indian impoverishment," "discouragement and eradication of the use of indigenous languages, " etc.

In short, the de facto principle has been that the Indian's salvation lies in his ceasing to be what and who he is, that it lies in becoming assimilated by the acceptance of "educative" procedures designed to alienate the child from his own people, beginning with the rule that English shall be the sole language of instruction.

SECTION TWO: *Salient facts and findings about American Indians*

POPULATION, LANGUAGES, AND LITERACY

Total population, all ages (BIA, 1960) 533,000 (including 29,000 Eskimos and Aleuts in Alaska)

Total aged 6-18 (BIA, 1966) 152,114

Enrolled in public schools	86,827
Enrolled in Federal schools	46,154
Enrolled in mission and other schools	8,713
Not in school	7,757
Not located	2,663

Wallace L. Chafe, of the Smithsonian Institution, has said (1962) that of the nearly 300 recognizably separate American Indian languages and dialects still extant — hence the same number of separate tribal groups — only roughly 40% have more than one hundred speakers. Fishman (1966) notes that in the case of about 55% of all languages the remaining speakers are of advanced age, which implies that many of the tongues — each one an irreplaceable miracle no less than the whooping crane — are destined to disappear.

Chafe finds (1965) that there are 64 indigenous languages spoken in the United States including Alaska, by 1000 or more speakers. William C. Sturdevant, also of the Smithsonian, has devised five categories of availability of literacy materials and applied them (as best estimates subject to refinement and correction) to the Chafe data. The information is included in Appendix 3 of these reports.

No one knows exactly what percent of the total Indian population or how many of those of school age, 6-18, retain the use of an Indian language. An estimate made in 1964 with the help of BIA education specialists set the number as 60% of the children in States which

have special Indian schools and 20% in States which place them all in the public schools. This would indicate that slightly over half of the 6-18 group retain use of the mother tongue. There are indications that this estimate is far too low. For example, an unpublished study recently completed by Dr. Nichols of Kansas State University shows that 91% of the Sioux Indians on the Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Crow Creek, and Sisseton reservations in South Dakota learn the Sioux tongue as their first language. A study of the Hopis, Navajos, Papagos, Sioux, Zias, and Zunis (Havighurst and Neugarten 1955) showed that of all these groups the Sioux retained least of their primitive culture. Read together, the data from these studies point to very high language retention among the other more isolated tribal groups.

Achievement In Public Schools

As measured in the Coleman Report (Coleman, 1966) by tests in both verbal and non-verbal skills administered in Fall, 1965, the average minority pupil (except Oriental Americans but including American Indians, Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans) scores distinctly lower at every level than the average white pupil. The difference in achievement was consistently greater in the 12th grade than in the 1st grade, which shows that under our present school policies and procedures and in comparison with majority group pupils *Indian children lose ground the longer they stay in school.* Whatever may be the nonschool factors which put minority children at a disadvantage in verbal and non-verbal skills when they enter first grade, the fact is the schools have not overcome them.

The Coleman Report points out that a substantial number of Indian and Mexican-American first graders are in schools in which they are the majority group. This is not true at the 12th grade. Roughly 35% of Indian pupils in first grade are in schools of between 90-100% Indian enrollment. At grade 12, however, less than 10% of Indian pupils are in schools with 80-100% Indian enrollment.

School Environment; Pupil Attitudes

In 1965 only 1% of the Indian children in elementary schools had Indian teachers. One percent were taught by Mexican-Americans, 14% by Negroes, and 83% had "white" teachers. Only one per cent of them had an Indian principal. In the secondary schools 2% of the Indian children had Indian teachers. One per cent were under Mexican-American teachers, 8% were under Negroes, and 88% learned from "white" teachers. No Indian child in secondary school had an Indian principal.

By the teachers' own report, twenty-six percent of the elementary and 24% of the secondary school teachers of the average Indian pupil would prefer not to be teaching Indians. They would prefer to be teaching Anglo-Saxon children.

The same Coleman Report reveals a pupil attitude factor which appears to have a stronger relationship to achievement than do all the "school" factors together. This factor is the extent to which an individual feels that he has some control over his own destiny. Indian

pupils have far less conviction than majority group pupils that they can affect their own environment and future. On the question of "self-concept" the Indian pupils showed the highest percentage answering "below average" to the question "How bright do you think you are?" and other indicators show the Indian pupils in 12th grade to have the lowest self-concept of all minority groups tested. Although of all variables attitudinal variables have the strongest relation to school achievement, *these variables appear to be little influenced by variations in school characteristics.* In sum, the Coleman Report makes a convincing case for the view that student achievement depends largely on forces over which today's schools exercise little control.

SECTION THREE: *Ideals and realities: assimilation without alienation*

Section One, above, postulates the ideal goal of the educator as maximum self-fulfillment for every Indian child. The goal of the statesman has been the elimination of the Indian "problem": the disadvantageous differences between him and the dominant majority. Indian education policy in the past has considered the two goals incompatible and has sacrificed the first one to the second. There has been, especially since the Meriam Report, some ethnocentric lip-service to individual self-fulfillment, but in fact the policy has been seen as disadvantageous, emphasizing every difference between the Indian and the "white" man: his religion, his ethics, his child-rearing practices, etc., — his entire life-style — and has sought to change all of these. The result has been failure far beyond the mere school statistics of retardation, underachievement and dropouts. The official language policy has kept the Indians in the primitive status of non-literate peoples; their languages are used only for oral communication, with minor, inconsequential exceptions noted above in Section Two), and the constant effort to eliminate the differences, forcing each child, in greater or lesser degree, to choose between his own people and the outside world, is nothing less than attempted assimilation by alienation.

The language and alienation policies together have effectively prevented the formation of an Indian intelligentsia and have systematically cut away from the tribes most of their potential leaders. The overall result has tended to keep the Indians in a condition of unleavened peasantry. The educational policies actually followed in the past are thus seen to be self-defeating and in direct opposition to the statesman's goal.

The view taken in this paper is that the sole disadvantageous difference that matters is the extent of the Indian's lack of self-sufficiency, and that self-sufficiency comes only from self-fulfillment at every age level. The recommendations which follow rest on the belief that the ideal goal of the educator and the goal of the statesman are fully compatible and that each could reinforce the other. The recommendations reject as irrelevant (though not as untrue or inconsequential) both the romantic's notion that in the Indian cultures there is much that is worth preserving and the notion that the "white" man's ways are necessarily superior because they are dominant.

In sum, the view taken here is that self-sufficiency—realized through self- fulfillment for each individual Indian child and for each separate

Indian tribe — will not only achieve the statesman's goal, but that it is the surest, quickest road to self-dispersal of the tribes and their eventual assimilation and disappearance. (Whether such a result is to be viewed happily or unhappily is not the concern of this paper.) The reasoning is simple:

(1) if a group is self-sufficient it ceases to be a problem; and (2) in this country the mobility, both social and geographical, of educated people, especially college-educated ones, is very high; and this kind of mobility means living where the children, whether or not they learn the Indian mother tongue, are middle-class youngsters swept along on the sea of middle-class English and the value system which English transmits. (Confirming evidence is found in a study which compared permissive and suppressive cultural contacts between whites and Indians. The initial Yaqui-Spanish contact appears to have been a permissive one, with the result that a fusion of Yaqui and Spanish cultural elements took place in a comparatively short time. Conversely, Tewa-Spanish relations were marked by coercion and suppression of Indian ceremonies and customs, and up to the present time Spanish and Tewa cultural patterns have remained distinct. (Cf. Dozier, 1964.)

The specific recommendations which follow implement the principle of self-determination (including the choice of language) and the belief that the only road of development of a people is that of self-development, including the right to make its own decisions and its own mistakes, educate its own children in its own ways, write its own poems and stories, revere its own gods and heroes, choose its leaders and depose them — in short, to be human its own way and demand respect for that way.

If it is true that society as a whole — in this case each separate tribal society with its own history, language, and system of beliefs and behavior — is inescapably the major shaper and educator of a child (as compared to the much lesser effect of the school) educational policy should seek to strengthen and develop and ennoble the social structure as a whole. The opposite strategy, efforts to weaken or bypass the Indian social structure and lessen its influence on the child, inevitably deprives him of his main source of growth and strength.

Section Four: *Recommendations*

The necessary brevity of this position precludes specific recommendations on every point and situation. The policies enunciated would be applied to the extent of their pertinence in terms of the status outlined above in *Section Two* and as quickly as feasible. Feasibility is not meant to depend, however, on such factors as the death or retirement of supernumerary teachers now employed to work with Indian children, but rather on factors such as the readiness of printed school materials for beginning programs of bilingual instruction.

Education is much more than what happens in the schools. We have seen that the Coleman Report implies one conclusion above all others: that schools bring little influence to bear on a child's achievement that is independent of his background and general social context. This means that it is essential to involve the home and the entire social

group, exalt them and their virtues, and build them up in order to build on them. All of the recommendations have this aim; all seek to develop self-sufficiency through self-fulfillment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Indians should run their schools, determine the curriculum, set fiscal policy, and hire and fire the school administrators, teachers and other employees. (A very promising prototype school which works on this principle is the Rough Rock Indian Demonstration School at Chinle, Arizona.) In the case of public schools which receive Johnson-O'Malley funds, eligibility for the funds should be conditioned on Indian representation on the school board proportional to the number of Indian children enrolled in the system.

2. It should without exception be the policy in the schools and in all other matters that Indians employed with Federal funds for work in association with other Indians should be of the same tribal and mother tongue group as the others with whom they are to work. This means, for example, that Indian teachers, teachers aides, administrators, clerks, janitors, etc., working with the Hopis will be Hopis and have Hopi as their mother tongue. Likewise, every effort should be made to group children on the basis of the language they speak, in order to encourage them to verbalize their experiences, encourage socializing, and strengthen their tribal bonds. W. W. Beatty stated (La Farge, 1942) that "In the majority of cases the Indians who are employed on the Sioux reservations come from Oklahoma, while educated Sioux are sent to the Southwest and Southwest Indians are employed in Oklahoma or the Northwest.")

3. Beginning immediately in the first three grades of all-Indian schools, and in grades 4, 5, and 6 of such schools as soon as a minimal complement of Indian language teaching materials can be prepared, bilingual instruction (Gaarder, 1966) will be instituted.

This will provide (based on the model of the Cuban half of the Coral Way bilingual elementary school in Dade County, Florida) instruction in all areas of the curriculum, except English, during one half of every school day by Indian teachers using their Indian tongue as the medium, and closely coordinated instruction in the same areas of the curriculum, except the Indian tongue, by teachers from the dominant group using English as the medium. In all cases the teachers teach in their mother tongue.

In schools where only a part of the pupils are Indian children, instead of the full 50-50 bilingual program there will be at least one hour of instruction per day through the medium of the Indian language, designed to reinforce all areas of the school curriculum in grades 1-6. The purpose of this entire recommendation is to avoid retardation, strengthen the home-school relationship, and enhance the child's self-concept. (It should be borne in mind that it is much easier for a native speaker to *learn to read* an Indian language with a scientifically developed phonemic alphabet than its for a child speaker of English to *learn to read* English. This fact gives the Indian child a signal

advantage in school over the monolingual English-speaking child. (Cf. Gaarder, 1967.)

4. A program of language development — recording, writing and publication in the Indian (and Eskimo and Aleut) tongues should begin at once, dealing both with Indian history, religion, lore, folk-tales, points of view on current problems, etc., and with the essential subject matter of the school curriculum.

This work could be undertaken for every language which has at least 1000 speakers. In the languages with relatively few speakers the publication program might be limited to those materials needed in grades 1-3 to form a strong bridge to English. For the major languages each people would eventually set the limits of what is desirable and feasible. (Section Two shows roughly the present status of Indian language development. The program envisaged would require help from scientific (descriptive) linguists. It is far from a momumental task and would not be unduly costly if properly managed.)

5. Every effort should be made to develop a strong, mutually-reinforcing relationship between the Indian pupils' parents and the school. The four recommendations above are meant to bring this about. In addition, the school should become a place for other adult-centered activities: a) recording on tape the oral history, lore, etc., of the group for playback in the schools and by radio, and later transcription for editing and publication b) live story-telling by the wits and sages of the tribe; and c) adult literacy classes in both the mother tongue and English. Again it should be borne in mind that with a scientifically-designed phonemic alphabet an adult can learn very easily to read his own language. This means that he quickly masters all of the *mechanics* of reading in any language with Roman script, and thus has a powerful bridge to English.)

6. Every effort should be made to stimulate and encourage the emergence of native leaders in each tribal group. We take note of the statement by W. W. Beatty "that the true native leaders were either ignored or displaced by those who showed subservience to government or church . . . these subservient Indians would not normally have achieved leadership. This is why the reports say that educated Indians cannot be used successfully in the administration of their own tribal groups." We agree with Beatty's advice to seek leaders among the "young Indians who are aggressive, critical, and inclined to be non-cooperative." (LaFarge, 1942)

7. There is need for a graduate study and research center focussed on the history, languages, and culture of American Indians. The same center could coordinate much of the publication of teaching material and other items in the Indian languages.

8. To pupils whose mother tongue is not English and who come to school knowing little or no English, English must inevitably be taught *as a second language*. This does not deny its primacy as the official language of the nation, but means that special teaching methods are required. The self-sufficiency which is the goal of these recommendations *requires that English be learned well by every Indian child*. Bilingual education (the use of the indigenous Indian tongue as a teaching

medium to assure acquisition and mastery of the *content* of the curriculum while English is still being mastered as a *vehicle* of instruction is one half of the strategy to bring this about. The other half is the use of better methods and materials for teaching English, guided by the insights into language found in scientific (descriptive) linguistics.

9. Indian children should preferably not be put in boarding school, and in no case should children of different language groups be put together in such schools. Far preferable, in the view taken here, is a much simpler one-room or hogan-type school close to home, with bilingual instruction given by two different teachers (one Indian-speaking, one English-speaking) even though by ordinary educational standards the simpler school seems to be of far lesser quality.

10. Mere transfer of all Indian children from BIA schools to public schools under State control would remove the seeming anomaly of a Federal agency running local school systems, but this transfer by itself would solve nothing. To be convinced of this one has but to reflect on the quality of the education received by Mexican-American children in the public schools.

11. Action should be taken immediately to remove all religious organizations of other than Indian origin from direct influence in the education of Indian children on reservation or other Federally- or State-controlled property. The purpose of this recommendation is not to abridge in any way freedom of religion among the Indians or hinder them from sending their children to sectarian private schools outside of the reservations, but rather to eliminate a major divisive (and therefore destructive) force which hinders the free self-development of the Indian peoples: dividing the individual within his own mind and each sect from all the others. Quasi-official sanction of the division of Indian peoples among competing sects of white proselytizers should be seen as what it is: the use of Federal or State power to favor one religion over another.

12. Although the educational policy set forth in this paper involves the whole of each Indian society rather than merely its system of schools, the policy can be summarized thus in terms of the reservation schools: bilingual education with each Indian tongue and English given equal time and treatment as mediums of instruction, using approximately equal numbers of same-Indian-language-speaking teachers and English-speaking teachers in the schools, all of which would be administered by same-Indian-language principals and superintendents under same-language school boards, and all of which would seek maximum identification geographically and socially with their constituent families, eliminating all boarding schools not expressly desired by those families, and involving the parents maximally through both direct and representative exercise of power.

Since it is not to be expected that any agency or faction now exercising power in ways contrary to the spirit and letter of these recommendations would voluntarily change those ways, there should be something in the nature of a national commission empowered to set policy for all Federal agencies concerned with the Indians in any way whatsoever, in order to effectuate these recommendations.

1. Wallace L. Chafe. "Estimates Regarding the Present Speakers of North American Indian Languages," in *International Journal of American Linguistics*, XXVIII, 3, 1962 updated by Chafe in *IJAL*, XXXL, 4, 1965)
2. James S. Coleman et. al. *Equality of Educational Opportunity*. Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1966, pp. 21, 23, 41, 126-9, 141, 153, 155, 166-9, 199, 212-13, 220, 287-88, 297, 325
3. Edward P. Dozier, "Two Examples of Linguistic Acculturation: The Yaqui of Sonora and Arizona and the Tewa of New Mexico," in *Language in Cuture and Society — A Reader in Linguistics and Anthropology* (Dell Hymes, ed.) New York: Harper & Row, 1964
4. Joshua A. Fishman. *Language Loyalty in the United States*, The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1966
5. A. Bruce Gaarder. (The rationale for bilingual education for children who have a mother tongue other than English. Testimony before the Special Subcommittee on Bilingual Education of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, U. S. Senate, May 18, 1967) in *Congressional Record*, Vol. 113, No. 78, Washington D. C., pp. S7102, S7103
6. A. Bruce Gaarder. "Organization of the Bilingual School," in *The Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, April 1967
7. Robert J. Havighurst and Bernice L. Neugarten. *American Indian and White Children — A Sociopsychological Investigation*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955
8. Oliver LaFarge (ed.) *The Changing Indian*, Norman Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1942, pp. 139-140
9. Henry M. Wriston. "The Individual," in *Goals for Americans. The Report of the President's Commission on National Goals, and Chapters Submitted for the Consideration of the Commission*. Prentice-Hall, 1960, p. 49. The Brandeis quotation is from the same essay, p. 37.